

**Minutes**  
**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM TASK FORCE**  
**April 12, 2005 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.**  
**Group Decision Support Center, Pennino Building**

**Approved 4-26-05**

**Members Present:** Joyce Bissonette, Marilyn Blois, William Lecos, Joan Carr, John Hasel, Joyce Dougherty, Conrad Mehan, Paul Liberty, Joanne McCoy, Queenie Cox, Sheila Roit

**Member Absent:** Phil Auld, Clark Tyler, Robin Smyers, Jim Langemeier

**Facilitator:** JR Holt, JRH Associates, Inc.

**Guests:** Chuck Minor, AAA

**County staff:** Jeff Smithberger, Marilyn McHugh, Linda Boone, Deborah Wisoff

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:03, when a quorum was present. The minutes of the March 29, 2005 meeting were approved as presented.

The Chairman thanked Clark, Paul, Conrad, Joyce, Jeff, JR Holt and Linda for their work in reordering and revising the final draft report to be considered at the meeting.

The Chairman discussed the agenda for the meeting:

- Review the final text for the last 2 topics in the Operations chapter
- Determine if there were any other issues that needed to be discussed
- Review the remainder of the report one last time
- Discuss the cover letter to the Board of Supervisors

Operations Chapter Discussion

The task force immediately moved into discussion of the final 2 topics of the report.

Line 1040 – Ms. Cox moved and Mr. Mehan seconded the motion to add “in Sanitary Districts” to the topic title. The motion passed unanimously.

Line 1043 – an administrative change was approved to delete the word “the”, so the phrase read, “by a member of the Board...”.

Line 1072 – Mr. Liberty prepared a motion to add language that read: “Require the county to adopt a sunset provision for any future sanitary districts every five years, whereby the county will be required to certify that the district would like to continue being in existence. For existing districts, the county would begin a process to have each district certify that they would certify that they would like to maintain the present relationship. For districts in existence for more than five years, the process for certification would begin as of July 1, 2006. For districts with less than 5 years of existence, their certification would begin on the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their creation. If legislation is necessary, the county should seek a technical amendment to the law governing sanitary districts to obtain such a provision. The certification process would enable greater flexibility for customers to evaluate market conditions and provide necessary feedback to the government to plan for equipment and manpower expenditures related to the districts for future periods.” The motion received a second from Mr. Lecos. There was extensive discussion about giving residents the option of easily getting out of the sanitary districts. An opposing idea was

raised about causing residents additional work by requiring sanitary districts to respond periodically to keep their county service. This proposal would cause a big administrative burden on the county staff, who would have to initiate the process periodically. Information about creating or decreating a sanitary district is currently available on the county's webpage. The legal issue of decreation of a sanitary district is covered in the motion by stating that the approval of the motion may require a legislative change. This motion gives residents the choice of waste collectors, thus improving competition in the county.

A friendly amendment was added to require the existing thresholds to recertify or decreate, which was accepted by Mr. Liberty. This was identified as an administrative process that Mr. Liberty wanted to put in place that allows citizens in sanitary districts a periodic choice of collection company or the county. The consensus of the task force was that some sort of notification to sanitary district residents about their ability to decreate a sanitary was probably a good idea.

The task force voted on the motion as written. Yes 3 Against 7 . The motion failed.

Line 1075 – Ms. Cox asked for clarification of the statement about impact on the General Fund is needed. It was explained that there is no impact on the General Fund since users of the service pay for the service. Ms. Cox's motion failed for lack of a second.

Line 1091 – an administrative change was approved to delete the redundant words "in county's role."

Line 1107 – Mr. Mehan moved to support wording of the recommendation, then withdrew the motion. Mr. Lecos moved and Mr. Hasle seconded to remove the recommendation and add the text as the last paragraph of the topic discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Cox moved to reword a recommendation to read, "County staff should further analyze the four models regarding the County's role in sanitary district waste collection operations." The motion failed for lack of a second.

Line 1112-1114 -- administrative changes to tense of verbs in lines 1112 -1114 were approved.

Line 1128 – administrative change was approved to remove the word "of"

An administrative change was approved to change the number of sanitary districts homes to be 42,000 throughout the report.

Line 1151 – Ms. Cox moved to reword the recommendation to read, "Currently the recycling collection is performed by one vendor for the approximately 42,000 homes in the sanitary districts. County staff should analyze the feasibility of sectioning sanitary districts into multiple contracts and its impact on competition and homeowners. It is recognized that one company still may win multiple awards, or that consolidation over time may occur." Mr. Lecos seconded the motion and offered a friendly amendment. The motion passed unanimously.

Line 1156 -- an administrative change to substitute "notify" for "continue to let.. know" was approved.

The Quality Customer Service Standards can and should be included in any contracts for services to be provided by private collection companies under contract with the county.

#### Other issues to be discussed

The task force members reviewed their charter and did not have other issues to add to the report.

#### Final review of Report

The task force then moved to a final review of the entire report.

Line 81 – Mr. Tyler had submitted written changes to the report that were entered as a motion to delete lines 81-84 and change the sentence to read, “The recommendation in the report for an expanded county role in the control and administration of residential solid waste collections spurred significant community concern and the Board of Supervisors decided to remove...”. The motion was seconded by Ms. Carr and passed unanimously.

Line 758 – Mr. Tyler provided a written motion to add a sentence that read, “One community (Hallcrest Heights) is working with the county to design and implement a “model community composting” project which would process yard waste on-site and through its homeowners association direct and integrate the efforts of the grounds maintenance contractor as well as the residential waste collector.” Ms. Bissonette seconded the motion and it passed unanimously after a friendly amendment was added by Ms. Bissonette to include the name of the community involved.

#### Review of Cover Letter to the Board of Supervisors

The task force reviewed the draft cover letter that will transmit the completed report to the Board of Supervisors.

The cover letter should be addressed to the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

Extensive discussion followed about the tone and wording of paragraph 1 of the letter. In split votes words such as “radical proposal” and “public outcry” were deleted. Some members thought the gist of the paragraph did not reflect the Board’s decision to establish the SWTF to solve issues identified by county staff during the preparation of the Solid Waste Management Plan. The Board had already deleted the county staff’s recommendation to become more involved with customer service issues by overseeing residential waste collection throughout the county. The Board members realized that the issues underlying that recommendation remained and needed to be addressed, so the SWTF was formed.

Mr. Lecos moved and Ms. Roit seconded replacing paragraph one of the letter with, “In 2004, the county staff presented to the Board of Supervisors a comprehensive 20-year Solid Waste Management Plan as required by the state. One element of that plan recommended the county oversee residential collection for all county households. After vigorous public objections, this recommendation was removed from the 20 year plan. Members of the Board recognized that other important issues identified in the plan that led to the county staff’s recommendation including customer service, the environment, and the interaction of the collection companies and the county required more study and public input. The Board created the Solid Waste Task Force (SWTF) to bring together citizens, county staff and the residential waste collection community to address the issues raised in the 20-year plan. The motion passed by a vote of Yes 10 No 1.

In paragraph 2 of the letter, Ms. Cox moved and Mr. Mehan seconded the motion to add “...range of topics regarding solid waste management,” to the first sentence. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. McCoy moved to reword paragraph 3 and Ms. Roit and others seconded the motion to change the last sentence to read, "We strongly urge you to adopt the recommendations spelled out in the report and implement a strategic plan with measurable goals." It passed unanimously.

Mr. Liberty moved and Mr. Lecos seconded a motion to delete sincerely from the letter. It passed unanimously.

#### Other Matters

The Chairman directed staff to incorporate the changes to the report and cover letter so that the task force could approve the final report at the April 26 meeting.

The task force would like to have some photographs added within the text of the report.

Ms. McCoy stated that initially she had indicated her collection company might not subscribe to the Quality Customer Service Standards but she now intends to become a charter member and would encourage other collectors to subscribe also.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be April 26, 2005 at 7:00 pm in the Group Decision Support Center.

# **SOLID WASTE TASK FORCE REPORT FROM APRIL 12TH MEETING**

**Tuesday, April 12, 2005**

## ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO ENTIRE REPORT

Global change from the word "haulers" to "collectors" or "waste collectors"

Find and replace the correct number of homes in sanitary districts -- 42,000 .

Correct verb tenses throughout

Use consistent bullet formats throughout. Some bullets are double spaced (page 10 & 30 & 32) and some are single spaced (page 12 & 23 & 27)

## Chapter 1 Executive Summary

### Background

69

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) promulgated regulations in 2001 that required all jurisdictions to prepare and submit a solid waste management plan to the state by July 1, 2004. These plans describe how the jurisdictions' solid waste management system will operate during the next 20 years and encompass all source reduction, reuse, recycling, collection, transportation and disposal activities within the jurisdiction, both public and private.

75

In Fairfax County, this comprehensive plan was developed over an 18-month period and contained input from stakeholders, residents, businesses, and county staff. An extensive community outreach program gathered information about relevant topics via an online survey, attendance at hundreds of community meetings, formal public meetings and culminated in a public hearing before the county's Board of Supervisors on May 10, 2004. Most of the recommendations in the plan were approved at the public hearing. One recommendation—that the county become more involved in oversight and control of residential waste collection—spurred community discussion of collection services. Following the many comments about the need for further study of residential collection issues, the Board of Supervisors decided to remove the recommendation from the plan and create the Solid Waste Task Force (SWTF). With this change made, the plan was submitted to VDEQ in June 2004.

### PASSED

MOTION: Clark SECOND: Joan

Line 81:

Replace from "One recommendation ...through the BOS"

The recommendation in the report for an expanded county role in the control and administration of residential solid waste collections spurred significant community concern and the Board of Supervisors ....

88

The Solid Waste Task Force (SWTF or task force) was appointed by the Board of Supervisors in May 2004 to work with county staff "to resolve issues related to service quality, competition, air emissions from trucks, safety, disaster and emergency response, unified recycling activities and other issues that may be specified by the Board of Supervisors" that had been identified during the public outreach process prior to approval of the Solid Waste Management Plan.

### Members of the Solid Waste Task Force

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Member	Stakeholder Position
William Lecos , Chairman*	Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce
Joanne McCoy, Vice Chairman*	Small Solid Waste Collection Company

Phil Auld	Large Solid Waste Collection Company
Marilyn S. Blois	Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission
Joyce Bissonette	Fairfax County Small Business Commission
Joan Carr	Community representative
Queenie Cox	County Sanitary District Customer
Peter Crane (resigned)	Large Solid Waste Collection Company
Joyce Dougherty	Solid Waste Management Program Staff
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John Hasle	Small Solid Waste Collection Company
Jim Langemeier	Recycling Market
Paul J. Liberty	Subscription Customer
Conrad Mehan	Medium Solid Waste Collection Company
Sheila Roit	Environmental Quality Advisory Council
Robin Smyers	Contract Customer
John Townes (resigned)	Community representative
Clark Tyler	Community representative

\* The Chair and Vice-Chair were elected at the first task force meeting.

119

County staff assisted the SWTF during its deliberations. Jeff Smithberger, Director of Division of Solid Waste Collection and Recycling, was the principal county staff member, assisted by Linda Boone, Branch Chief, Planning and Resource Recovery, Division of Solid Waste Disposal and Resource Recovery. Additional county resources were provided by Marilyn McHugh, Assistant County Attorney.

125

Logistics Management Institute (LMI), a non profit consulting firm located in Tysons Corner, worked periodically with the task force as a multi-functional resource that had been involved with the development of the Solid Waste Management Plan.

130

JRH Associates, Inc., an Alexandria company, provided facilitation and technology support using GroupSystems software at the county's Group Decision Support Center.

## **Objectives**

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The objectives of the task force identified during the initial task force meeting on June 8, 2004 and reiterated during the September 2004 meeting were:

137

1. To prepare a report to the Board of Supervisors within one year (May, 2005).

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2. To enhance relationships between collection companies and the county by improving communication.

142

3. To ensure local communities are kept abreast of and involved in the task force process.

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4. To ensure that the small business point of view is represented.

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5. To identify mutually beneficial resolution of issues.

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6. To educate about expansion of all types of recycling.

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7. To ensure that issues are resolved in the best interest of the community.

148

8. To reach viable consensus on issues with consideration of a broad perspective of ideas.

150

The SWTF in conjunction with county staff organized their activities and met monthly. The task force identified and categorized the issues and methodically worked through them using facilitated meetings and the group decision support technology to assist in the discussion, consensus building and preparation of this report. The initial issues list is shown in Appendix A.

155

Members of the task force met periodically with waste collection companies and the Citizens Advisory Committee on Solid Waste to discuss the deliberations and gather feedback about the recommendations contained in this report. Task force members toured seven local composting, disposal, recycling or transfer operations early in the process to familiarize themselves with environmental and operations issues. During the tour members gathered information from the facility operators about the county's integrated waste management system. The proceedings of the task force were continually updated and available to the community for review on a specially designed webpage on the county's website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/swtf>.

## **Methodology**

167

The issues surrounding residential waste collection were complex and the perspectives of the task force members diverse. The task force agreed to organize the issues into 4 categories: customer service, environmental, operations and communication issues. Similar issues were consolidated, defined, discussed and then prioritized within the categories. These categories form the framework for the remainder of this report.

173

Task force members researched information about each topic, investigated how their stakeholders felt about the issue, participated in discussions about the issue, and weighed the impact on the community of various recommendations. Finally, each issue was assessed in terms of any recommendations the task force would like to make to the Board of Supervisors. Full and complete discussion of each issue resulted in members being apprised of the implications of recommendations such as cost, difficulty to implement within the county or by the collection companies, and impacts of the residential waste collection service changes on residents or customers.

182

The task force used the GroupSystems software in the Fairfax County Group Decision Support Center (GDSC) and a facilitator/technographer. This technology allowed the task force to capture all ideas anonymously, define nuances of issues, vote on items, and craft consensus-based recommendations during discussions of the complex and controversial customer service, communication and operations issues. The use of the county's Group Decision Support Center enabled the task force to aggressively proceed with reviewing issues and determining its recommendations. Input from the GDSC process is included in the minutes for the October 2004 through April 2005 meetings; see Appendix B for all SWTF meeting minutes.



## **Recommendations**

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The recommendations that follow were the result of research, dialog among the task force members, discussions with collection companies at their quarterly meetings, input from residents and community groups via email links from the webpage, and other sources who wished to comment. The recommendations in some cases supported work that was already done as part of the development of the Solid Waste Management Plan process. The recommendations represented a consensus of the task force members. Some recommendations required additional work on the part of county staff or the collection companies.

201

A few issues have multiple recommendations others may have none. In some instances, after a thorough review of the issues the recommendation was to continue with the current practices or policies. In those instances, no additional recommendation was made beyond continuing with the status quo.

205

The SWTF agreed its significant contributions to the improvement of residential waste collection have been:

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-- Facilitating the development of quality customer service standards to which many collection companies have already subscribed.

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-- Emphasizing communication enhancements among the collection companies, the county, and their customers.

211

-- Advocating for increased recycling in the county, both for residents and businesses, and the identification of other environmental issues that need to be resolved in the future.

214

-- Validating the county's lead role in disaster operations and in operating the county's disposal facilities that allow for a more level playing field among private collection companies.

## **Chart**

218

The following chart summarizes all of the recommendations of the task force report. Each recommendation is referenced by the chapter in which the discussion occurred.

## **Chapter 2 Customer Service**

### **Overview of Customer Service Issues**

224

Customer service was the primary issue that the Board of Supervisors asked the SWTF to examine and resolve several longstanding issues. A number of service concerns identified during the development of the Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) and issues raised by collectors and members of the task force comprised the following discussion items and recommendations.

229

The SWTF used a similar process for understanding customer service issues as it used for studying all the issues. The task force researched information on complaint categories, scrutinized current practices, and sought proposals and suggestions for improvements from residential waste collection companies and community leaders. Given the number and complexity of some of the issues, the task force used the county's GroupSystems software and the Group Decision Support Center to examine customer service issues and develop recommendations that would improve customer service throughout the county.

237

A significant accomplishment of the task force was facilitating/encouraging the development of a customer service document that collection companies could commit to use with their customers. The task force identified that the critical element in delivering good customer service was for collection companies to respond timely to the concerns of their customers. Enhancing communication coupled with a commitment from the collectors to meet or exceed their obligations became the basis for the quality customer service program and standards that were developed by the collection companies and endorsed by this task force. The Quality Customer Service Program will be a voluntary program, developed through a joint effort of the Solid Waste Task Force, the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, the solid waste collection firms operating in the county, and the Fairfax County Solid Waste Management Program.

250 Suggest this paragraph be removed from here and inserted at Line 280

All solid waste collection companies operating in Fairfax County are required to be permitted by Fairfax County on an annual basis, including being bonded, inspected, and insured. Collectors must also operate within the requirements of Fairfax County Code Chapter 109 at all times.

255

The heart of the quality customer service program is a list of quality service standards that provides customers with a general understanding of waste collection and recycling practices and the expectations that customers should have for their collectors. Collection companies that participate in this program have committed to provide their customers with a high level of service for their solid waste needs. This commitment enhances safe, timely and environmentally sound waste collection, and should raise the level of customer satisfaction with these services.

264

Improvements in environmental standards and goals, equipment limitations, safety standards and labor guidelines have resulted in a specialized array of collection and disposal practices that may appear unusual to some residents. The goal is to provide residents with a better understanding of current collection practices, the nature of the services that are available and the costs associated with these services, and to insure that residents are satisfied with the reliability of the services for which they subscribe.

272

Fairfax County is responsible to enforce compliance with the County's waste collection activities under the county code. County code can be reviewed on the county's website at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/trash/recyclingtrash.htm>. While the county supports the Quality Customer Service Standards, the standards are not enforceable under the Fairfax County Code, but are a voluntary statement by the collection companies of how they wish to provide services to their customers.

Suggest this paragraph from 250 be inserted here

All solid waste collection companies operating in Fairfax County are required to be permitted by Fairfax County on an annual basis, including being bonded, inspected, and insured. Collectors must also operate within the requirements of Fairfax County Code Chapter 109 at all times.

280

Residents can review a list of all solid waste collection firms permitted to operate in Fairfax County at the county's web location at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/trash.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/trash.htm). The complete quality customer service standards document is located at Appendix C. The names of collection companies that agree to these standards will be maintained on the county's website. Additionally, the county will annually require collection firms to renew their commitment to the quality customer service standard at permit renewal time before posting to the web site.

289

The task force explored the following issues and offer recommendations as ways to resolve customer service issues that have been identified.

## **Frequency of Service**

292

Discussion. As defined by the task force, this issue concerned whether all residents in the county had access to residential waste collectors who will provide the frequency of service required by the residents. County code requires that waste be collected at least weekly and the county collects weekly in the sanitary districts. Private companies offer a range of collection frequencies from daily to once-a-week. After discussing the topic, the task force agreed there were sufficient private collectors to serve county residents; there were few barriers to market entry for collection companies; and most residents have the opportunity to choose their frequency of collection.

302

The Fairfax County Code § 109-5-3 clearly established a baseline for collection frequency of once a week collection for refuse and separate collection of recyclables. The task force did not recommend changing the code at this time. If some customers wanted to have more frequent service and were willing to pay for it, the task force did not want to come between businesses and their customers by dictating a required frequency of service for everyone.

## **Missed Collections**

311

Discussion. Missed collections were a frequent service complaint heard by both county staff and Board members during the public comment period about the Solid Waste Management Plan. Task force members discussed the impact on customers of missed collections and explored the reasons for missed collections, such as having the waste set out improperly or too late for the collection. Most members agreed that customers wanted to have missed collections corrected within 24 hours. The possibility of imposing fines on collectors who have large numbers of missed collections was considered. However, questions arose about what was an appropriate number or percentage of missed collections, who would collect and maintain the data needed to support a penalty system, what the penalties would be, how they would be enforced and others [remove s from "others"] topics about implementing a penalty system for missed collections. The county does not currently have the resources to provide such services and some task force members did not want the county involved in imposing fines and penalties. Collection companies were already required by their permits to address their service levels with their customers. The companies could voluntarily expand this communication with customers to define their missed collection policy and any penalties or guarantees they wished to impose on themselves.

330

The task force further discussed the possible development of guidelines about missed collections. This could also be used as model contract language for community associations and residents contracting with collection companies for residential collection. Ultimately, the task force decided that providing such model contract language was not a function for county staff because the information could be obtained in the county-prepared publication Community Associations Manual and can be downloaded from the county's website at [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dtcs/consserv/community\\_assn\\_manual.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dtcs/consserv/community_assn_manual.htm).

339

The task force considered an idea of crafting a voluntary service level agreement or standard that collection companies would subscribe to and communicate to their customers. This conceptual agreement would state the service expectations and possible penalties for noncompliance. Some of the components identified for potential incorporation to the quality customer service standard could include:

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-- having someone answer the phone during operational hours or an automated answering service.

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-- providing a phone message stating if collection operations are delayed or cancelled, so that customers could know the status of collections.

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-- generally improving communications between the company and the customer.

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-- picking up missed collections within a specific number of business days.

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Task force members considered the idea of a county sponsored phone line for reporting and tracking of missed collections. However, the members determined that the expense and administrative questions made the phone line impractical to operate. Task force members used GroupSystems to vote on many of these topics related to missed collections.

### **Recommendation**

364

C-1. Residential collection companies should respond to missed collections within one business day, where response means communication with the customer but not necessarily resolution of the issue.

### **Competition**

371

Discussion. Competition among collection companies and the free market system were important principles supported by the task force. While members wanted to ensure that all residents have access to collection services, the task force believed the free market system will motivate collection companies to expand and offer services to areas that may be underserved. County residents have access to a variety of service options, such as: county collection in a sanitary district, hiring a private collection company, or taking their trash to a citizens' disposal facility. Informed customers will choose the service that best meets their needs.

380

Information about the availability of collection companies, services provided, and contact numbers is maintained on the county's website. Collectors can also be found by calling the county's solid waste program at 703-324-5230, where a database by zip code is maintained identifying what areas were served by each collection company.

385

One of the components that had sustained competition in Fairfax County was the fact that the county government owned, managed and operated the disposal facilities. It remained important to the long term viability of a market-driven system that the county continued to manage the disposal facilities. The county's policies offered a level playing field for collection and disposal companies so that large and smaller companies could compete for business within the community and pay the same disposal fees whether they dispose of large or small amounts of waste.

392

The task force discussed at length the option of the county assuming responsibility for contracting residential waste collection services for all county residents, but this option was rejected by the task force. At this time, additional recommendations will not assure that all residents have access to all service options or all companies serving Fairfax County. However, competition would encourage collectors to move into market areas where business opportunities arise. Following all these discussions, the task force determined that the current free market system with competition among collectors provided residents with the best prospect for having multiple options for collection services. Further, the task force identified few significant barriers for companies to enter into the market, even for small businesses.

### **Weight of Collection Containers**

404

Discussion. This issue arose from the public concern voiced by residents during the preparation of the Solid Waste Management Plan about the weight of trash containers that collection company employees must lift. The Fairfax County Code § 109-5-2 provides an upper limit of 50 pounds per container or individual piece that can be collected. After a thorough discussion of the various concerns about the weight of collection

containers, from the collectors' and customers' perspectives, the task force agreed it was not appropriate to change the criteria at this time. The amount of waste that companies were willing to allow their workers to collect remained a business decision and one that should be communicated to their customers as part of their ongoing communication.

## **Size and Volume of Brush**

416

Discussion. Currently the Fairfax County Code § 109-1-1 defines yard debris as "... the organic fraction of municipal solid waste that consists of grass clippings, leaves, brush, and tree and shrub trimmings arising from general landscape maintenance." Brush was included in the definition of yard debris. The Fairfax County Recycling Program Requirements of February 2003 required that brush be collected separately for recycling year-round, while yard waste was required to be collected from April 1 to December 24 annually. The task force discussed at length the need to more clearly define brush and yard waste. The discussion also expanded to address whether brush and yard waste should be collected separately for recycling.

427

In defining brush, collectors felt that brush resulting from storm damage or tree removal was not part of normal household waste. If the material was produced from a tree removal, then the resulting woody debris should be handled by a tree service or as a special collection for which the collectors could charge extra. The collectors defined brush as consisting of sticks, twigs and small branches that were the product from normal pruning of household trees and bushes. They contended that large amounts of brush should not be part of the regular trash collection. For purposes of this report, the task force defined brush as woody waste that resulted from pruning of trees, sticks, and twigs. Yard waste was then defined as vegetative matter, grass clippings, and leaves, produced during general landscape maintenance.

439

It was agreed by the task force that yard waste and brush needed to be collected separately and recycled for several reasons:

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-- Recycling brush and yard waste maintains capacity at the waste to energy facility for materials that cannot be composted.

443

-- Recycling allows brush and yard waste to be composted and recycled into useful mulching material.

445

-- Fairfax County is required by the State to maintain its recycling rate above 25% and if brush and yard waste were not recycled, the county would not be meeting this State mandate.

449

The discussion then moved to the size of brush to be collected as part of a regular waste collection operation. The length, diameter, weight, and total volume of brush that should be collected were considered. If brush was too long, too large in diameter, or too heavy, it could jam the collection truck's compaction system. Brush needed to be cut to a size that could be handled safely, efficiently, and effectively by waste collection companies. If there was too much brush, then the task force determined that it should be handled by companies with special crane equipment such as tree services operate. The task force agreed that a few changes should be made throughout the Fairfax County Code Chapter 109 to more clearly define the size of brush to be collected as regular household waste.

460

In the final analysis, waste collectors have the responsibility to define how their companies will provide brush collection, as long as they are in compliance with Fairfax County Code § 109-5-2. Collectors should define the maximum volume of brush they would collect as well as establish their prices for special collections.

465

Several votes were taken using the GroupSystems software to determine what, if any, recommendations should be made about the size and volume of brush to be collected. The task force members agreed that the collectors operating in the county should continue to be required to pick up brush as a regular residential waste collection and that collection should follow the requirements in the Fairfax County Code § 109-2-1 for source separation and 109-5-2 for amount, dimensions and weight.

### **Recommendation**

474

C-2. County staff should change Chapter 109 throughout to clearly distinguish brush from yard waste. The task force recommends that the definition include that brush consisted of woody waste that resulted from normal household pruning of trees, sticks and twigs. Brush to be collected should be no longer than 4 feet in length, no greater than 6 inches in diameter, with no individual piece or bundle weighing more than 50 pounds. Christmas trees remained exempt from the size limitations for brush collection.

### **Rate Increase Amounts Should Be Included in Rate Increase Announcements**

485

Discussion. The notice of a rate increase must be given at least 30 days prior to implementing the increase per Fairfax County Code § 109-5-8. The code does not require that the specific amount of the increase be included in the notice. The task force conducted a thorough discussion from various perspectives about whether rate increase notices should include the actual rate increase amount. Most members felt that collection companies should provide the amount of the increase and the rationale for it as a customer service strategy.

### **Recommendation**

495

C-3. County staff should change the Fairfax County Code § 109-5-8 to require collection companies to include the amount of the increase in the notice of a rate increase that is given at least 30 days prior to its implementation date.

### **Safety Issues (traffic congestion, unsafe driving on streets)**

499

Discussion. Task force members engaged in a comprehensive discussion of the various safety issues involved with multiple trucks collecting waste on residential streets. Topics included trucks zigzagging across streets to collect on both sides of neighborhood streets and speeding in neighborhoods. While these are important safety concerns, most task force members thought the resolution of these problems was beyond the scope of the task force and rested with law enforcement. Collection companies should voluntarily agree to operate safely on neighborhood streets as part of the quality customer service standards that have been developed in conjunction with this task force.

### **Extra Charges for Special Collections**

510

Discussion. The task force examined the definition of special collections and determined that what constitutes special collections varies significantly among collection companies. Most collectors charge separately for bulky items or large volumes of waste that are considered special collections, unless covered as part of a community contract. The task force agreed that whether to charge for special collections was a business matter for determination in the contract between the collection companies and their customers. Fairfax County Code § 109-5-10 allowed collection companies to charge separately for special collections.

### **Strategy for Emergencies**

519

Discussion: This issue concerned how private residential waste collection companies could and should be involved in debris clean up and waste collection during an emergency, disaster or weather event. The consensus of the task force was that the county played the critical role in the delivery of services during

emergencies. Further, the county Emergency Management Plan already described how the county would operate during various types of emergencies. County staff would designate a debris removal coordinator, who would keep collectors informed and work with them to maximize overall collection efforts.

528

County staff should review the emergency procedures periodically during quarterly collectors meeting to ensure that collectors were aware of various emergency/disaster responses prior to emergencies occurring. It was the sense of the task force that the county should be the central coordination and communication conduit for declared and undeclared emergencies.

534

Many members thought it was difficult to focus on other specific recommendations since there are many questions about what constitutes an emergency (declared and undeclared emergencies or disasters), the type of emergency (weather, natural, man-made, or terrorists), whether the county would pay collectors for their services, whether to lift restrictions for collectors during these emergencies, and many others.

541

The task force agreed that garbage and trash related to health and safety situations should be removed and disposed quickly by the regular trash services during emergencies. Some collectors on the task force stated that brush removal and recycling should not be a priority in a widespread disaster. Other members thought brush was the main problem in many weather related disasters. Collectors on the task force emphasized that they were not tree companies and were not equipped to handle amounts of brush significantly above county code requirements.

550

Some collector representatives on the task force stated collectors already view emergencies from the community-wide perspective and supported their customers to the extent of their equipment and resources. However, these representatives also stated that the county could accommodate them by relaxing restrictions, increasing operating hours, or lowering tip fees during unplanned events. County staff responded that lowering tip fees during such emergencies was not feasible since yard waste disposal facilities were external to the county and charged for their services. However, extended operating hours at county controlled facilities had occurred during a recent storm emergency and could be accommodated in the future, if needed.

561

There are many issues about emergencies that go beyond trash and debris removal such as handling of hazardous materials. When a state of emergency is declared, collectors need to know what to do to help the community recover from the event. Increased education about these emergency issues could be provided by county staff during the quarterly collectors meetings.

567

County staff wanted to develop a mechanism for collectors to be available, as needed and on a voluntary basis, to help in a coordinated cleanup effort. Collectors could provide whatever additional capacity they had after serving their customers to help with general community cleanup work. If collectors were used during emergencies and weather events, they wanted to have a mechanism to receive compensation for their efforts. The collectors on the task force wanted to provide trash services but stated they were generally not equipped to provide tree or construction/demolition/debris removal services. Essentially during an emergency, the role of the county would be to coordinate cleanup efforts. The coordinator for debris management would work with collection companies, so that if they had extra capacity, they would help with the countywide cleanup efforts.

579

Members of the task force attended a quarterly collectors meeting in January 2005, to discuss this issue and heard collectors state they were willing to help county staff provide for community cleanup, if they had the excess capacity after serving their customers and if they were paid for their efforts.

## **Recommendations**

585

C-4. County staff will take the lead during emergencies to coordinate cleanup efforts countywide.

587

C-5. Residential collection companies will work with their customers first to resolve emergency issues.

589

C-6. If capacity remained, the residential collection companies should voluntarily work with the county in performing cleanup efforts countywide. If collectors serve other than their customers, they should be reimbursed for their services by the county.

### **Service Level Agreement**

594

Discussion. As defined by the task force, a service level agreement was a set of quality customer service standards that the collection companies would provide to their customers. The customers could rely on the standards to define their expectations for good customer service when selecting a collection company.

599

Several members agreed there was value for collectors to create a voluntary charter for customer service that would describe how collection services would be provided to customers. A subcommittee of the task force met with the collectors to create a draft customer service program and define initial quality customer service standards. County staff mailed each collection company a copy of the draft to allow all collection companies to become familiar with the document and its concepts. The task force then facilitated a meeting on February 9, 2005, where all collection firms operating in Fairfax County were invited to attend and discuss the draft. Nine collectors, along with county staff, participated in the discussion that was held at the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce.

609

These discussions were fruitful and resulted in the quality customer service standards that are attached at Appendix C. The standards were displayed on the county's website and collectors who subscribe to the standards will be identified. Customers in the county will benefit from this concise statement of service levels and expectations when they are searching for a collection company. This statement may also be distributed by collectors to their customers. County staff intends to sign the standards and use them in communicating with their customers in the sanitary districts.

617

During the February 9 meeting, the collection companies also discussed the fragile nature of a voluntary customer service standard, and explored possible methods of reporting and tracking company satisfaction. No method for reporting and or tracking was selected. The group decided to publish the standards and rely upon the collection companies to maintain their own compliance with the standards. Customers will have the ultimate enforcement tool by changing collection companies if they are dissatisfied with a company's service performance.

Suggest we insert a copy of the Standards here rather than inserting them at the Appendices

### **Recommendation**

626

C-7. Residential collection companies and the Division of Solid Waste Collection and Recycling are encouraged to adopt the quality customer service standards as charter members and actively adhere to them. They should use the document in communicating with their customers and in training their employees. Communities and homeowners associations contracting with collection companies are urged to include a reference to these standards in their agreements.

## **Chapter 3 Environmental**

### **Overview of Environmental Issues in the County**

636



Sheila Roit, in her role as Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) representative, provided background information about the status of Fairfax County's environment. She offered history about the Clean Air Act of 1990 and its implications for the county as well as the potential impact on the county of pending federal legislation. She supplied the task force with recent reports from the county's Environmental Coordinating Committee's Air Quality Subcommittee, located online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/opa/airquality/cleanairmenu.pdf>. She also shared comments from the EQAC report discussing water quality, noise, hazardous materials, light, and other general environmental issues in the county, available online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/eqac/report/>.

646

With this context in place, the task force discussed the environmental issues concerning residential waste collection.

### **Air Emissions from Trucks and Use of Special Fuels**

649

Discussion. The discussion involved the possible consolidated collections of materials in order to reduce collection truck traffic on community streets, and the use of less-polluting fuels for collection vehicles. A majority of the task force members agreed that having competition among collectors was important and that the very nature of competition necessitated multiple trucks on streets. The county code requires separate collection of waste and recycling materials, which also resulted in additional collection trucks on streets; however, collectors can choose to collect waste and recyclables in the same vehicle and still meet county code requirements, as long as the materials are kept separated.

659

The SWTF members unanimously endorsed exploring other environmental initiatives designed to reduce truck emissions such as exploration of alternative fuels and fuel additives. A legal review by the County Attorney's Office revealed that the county currently lacked legal authority to purchase fuel for resale to private collection companies or otherwise sell its fuel to a private company. Enabling legislation would be necessary to implement this recommendation. Lacking that approval, the task force suggested that the county explore other options to facilitate the use of alternative fuels by private collection companies. County staff will continue to track the development of alternative fuels and make the results of their research available to residential waste collection companies for their consideration. County staff and collection companies will continue to explore fuel additives to reduce emissions from waste collection vehicles.

### **Collection and Recycling of Materials**

673

Discussion. The collection of recyclable materials was determined by the task force to be a health and safety requirement as well as a quality-of-life feature. The issue of whether waste and recyclable materials such as yard waste could be collected in the same vehicle was further described and debated. The discussion centered on whether there was a need to collect yard waste separately at all. The sense of the SWTF was that the current system of separate collections of yard waste and solid waste were needed in order to maintain the State-mandated recycling rate and to extend the capacity of the Energy/Resource Recovery Facility to process solid waste in the future.

### **Plastic Versus Paper Bags for Collection of Yard Waste and Leaves**

686

Discussion. The pros and cons of plastic versus paper bags for collection of yard waste were discussed from the perspective of collection companies, the yard waste processor, and residents. Generally, collection companies did not favor one method over the other, but agreed that paper bags were strong and would reduce confusion about whether a plastic bag contained trash or yard waste. They saw a possible benefit of being able to print customer information on paper bags.

693

From the yard waste composting perspective, paper bags were preferable since about 25% of the yard waste currently collected in plastic bags cannot be recycled because the plastic bags get caught in the debagging

machinery and have to be disposed in a landfill. A major local composting facility has asked the county's Business Advisory Committee on Solid Waste to recommend the use of paper kraft bags for collection of yard waste. The processor had suggested that in the future it might not take yard waste in plastic bags at all.

701

There were differing opinions about using paper bags since the bags may not be as readily available, may cost more in comparison to plastic bags, were heavy and unhandy to fill, and would remove choice from the residents. Several neighboring jurisdictions-City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, Town of Herndon, Arlington and Loudoun Counties-already required paper bags for yard waste collection. These jurisdictions were the county's major competitors for access to the limited yard waste recycling capacity in the region. In the future, the county may find itself without a local composting facility willing to take waste in plastic bags.

710

Environmental benefits of using paper were mentioned, but some task force members expressed concern that residents would balk at the proposition of banning plastic bags. Given the disparity of opinions about the value of paper versus plastic bags, county staff was asked to research the implementation of paper bag collection in other jurisdictions and provide additional information to the task force. That research is located in Appendix D.

717

Staff reported that the reason many programs around the country began composting yard waste was because their states or jurisdictions banned yard waste from landfills. Many composting facilities want to ban plastic bags. As noted above, some jurisdictions in the area have already banned plastic bags for the collection of yard waste. Most local jurisdictions that banned plastic bags for yard waste did so many years ago.

724

When local programs have implemented paper bag collection of yard waste, there were mixed reactions from customers. Some customers liked it and others hated it. A factual result of implementing paper bag collection was that the amount of rejected material at the composting facility was reduced significantly.

### **Recommendations**

730

E-1. County staff should develop an education campaign directed at encouraging citizens to voluntarily use paper bags for yard waste so that more of the material can be recycled.

734

E-2. County staff should continue to evaluate if more stringent restrictions are needed about how yard waste is collected in the years to come.

### **Separate Collection of Yard Waste within HOAs**

740

Discussion. In the past, some homeowners associations (HOAs) were granted exemptions from the requirement for separate pick up of yard waste by trash collection companies. This was based on the presumption that the grounds maintenance companies were disposing of most of the yard waste as part of their contracts. The task force discussion varied about the need to continue with the exemption to HOAs with grounds maintenance contracts. The exemption allowed the trash contractor to also accept "minimal amounts" of yard waste in the regular trash from homeowners. Many HOAs were townhome or condominium complexes with small private yards that did not generate much yard waste. Many had little or no room for composting, so what yard waste was produced could be disposed easily in the regular trash.

**PASSED**

**MOTION: Clark Second: Joyce B**

**line 750 Add sentence re Hallcrest Heights from Clark's paragraph:**

One community (Hallcrest Heights) is working with the county to design and implement a "model community composting" project which would process yard waste on site and through its Association direct and integrate the efforts of the grounds maintenance contractor as well as the residential trash collector.

751

A collection company representative had asked the county to determine what amount of this type of yard waste was permitted to be put in with trash. There was no decision about the amount of allowable yard waste, at this time. The SWTF members wanted to continue with the current system and encouraged homeowners in these HOAs to process their yard waste on site or within the community. The county could provide educational materials to collection companies for dissemination to their customers about grasscycling, backyard composting, and other topics. The county sponsors periodic sales of backyard composters that could be used within HOAs, if the communities are interested.

### **Recommendations**

761

E-3. County staff should continue the existing exemption on a site specific basis that allows small amounts of yard waste to be disposed in the regular trash when there is a general ground maintenance contract in place with an HOA.

765

E-4. For HOAs with the exemption, residential collection companies should continue to decide how much homeowner yard waste was acceptable as part of the regular trash service.

768

E-5. County staff should develop materials that encourage HOAs to process their homeowner yard waste on site and encourage landscape firms to process this portion of the waste stream.

771

E-6. County staff will develop educational materials that collection companies can disseminate to their customers about backyard recycling or community composting.

774

E-7. County staff will provide periodic sales of backyard composters and encourage residents to manage their own yard waste.

### **Electronic Waste (e-waste)**

778

Discussion. In the past county staff has held very successful community events to collect computer monitors and other equipment. Some jurisdictions across the United States have banned disposal of e-waste in landfills or incinerators. Processing of e-waste in the county's Energy/Resource Recovery Facility is a safe alternative, however, as projections show the amount of e-waste continuing to increase yearly, the county needs a policy about disposing of e-waste. The county's Recycling Drop-Off Centers are not staffed and so routine collection of e-waste at these sites would be problematic.

787

The currently contracts with ServiceSource, a nonprofit agency, to attend the community e-waste recycling events. ServiceSource employees help collect the monitors and electronics, collect fees from customers, and provide tax donation documentation. They transport the electronics to their workshop in Alexandria, where workers dismantle and dispose of the e-waste. In the future, a single agency or company may not be able to handle all the e-waste generated in the county. The sense of the SWTF was that the current system of periodic events was working to remove enough e-waste from the waste stream at this time. Further public outreach efforts should be directed toward encouraging residents to recycle their computers at these events. Additional information about e-waste recycling should be added to the county's website. Banning disposal of e-waste may be needed in the future, but not at this time.

## **Recommendations**

802

E-8. County staff should continue periodic community events to collect e-waste and remove it from the waste stream, and encourage other public/private partnerships to recycle e-waste.

805

E-9. County staff should add information about e-waste recycling, including definitions and a list of e-waste recycling opportunities to the county's webpage.

## **Removing Nickel Cadmium (NiCad) Batteries from the Waste Stream**

810

Discussion. The task force discussed various ways to effectively remove NiCad and other rechargeable batteries from the waste stream. The task force specifically examined three alternatives: curbside collection, collection at the two county solid waste complexes at I-66 and I-95, and partnership with the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation (RBRC). The curbside collection alternative was too expensive to implement. Collection at the solid waste complexes was not especially convenient for residents, since most people would not travel to a facility just to dispose of a small battery. Partnering with RBRC was viewed as the most viable and low cost alternative since virtually the only cost is county staff time. RBRC already has developed promotional materials and collection points identified through agreements with companies such as Radio Shack, WalMart, Target, Best Buy and other retailers where new batteries are sold. The RBRC covered the shipping, processing and disposal costs. With the county publicizing this program, residents will learn of the availability and need for recycling rechargeable batteries. The SWTF wanted to continue to implement the strategies identified in the Solid Waste Management Plan to remove NiCad batteries from the waste stream. Collection companies, retailers and the media could help disseminate information about the battery recycling program. Support from the county's General Fund would be needed to support this activity.

## **Recommendations**

831

E-10. County staff will expand its partnership with the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation to publicize their existing program for accepting NiCad and rechargeable batteries at retailers for further recycling and removal from the waste stream.

835

E-11. Residential collection companies, the county, and retailers should help disseminate information about the program to their customers through coordinated public outreach messages.

## **Chapter 4 Operations**

### **Overview of Operations Issues**

841

Operations issues covered a broad range of topics dealing with how collection services are conducted in the county. The topics ran the full gamut of operational matters from how collection vehicles were permitted to the continuing role of the county as a waste collector, from the county's role in enforcement of county code to the contracting process for county collection services. As with previous discussions, the task force researched ideas, met with collectors, and identified strategies for improving waste collection operations in the county. Task force members attended quarterly county-sponsored meetings with the permitted collection companies to learn first hand their viewpoints on the issues. During these meetings, task force members listened and asked questions, obtaining a more detailed understanding of the solid waste collection business in Fairfax County.

854

County staff also encouraged the collection companies to be involved in the deliberations of the SWTF and several companies attended the monthly SWTF meetings. The attendees offered ideas and suggestions that were considered in developing the final recommendations of the task force.

859

The task force hosted a meeting with collection companies held at the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce in February 2005, to discuss and develop the quality customer service standards that will be adopted by many of the collection companies to describe their customer service practices.

\*864

The task force paid particular attention to the impact of county regulations as barriers for private companies to enter into the marketplace or restrictions on competition within the marketplace. The consensus of the task force was that none of these operational items either singly or collectively presented a barrier to entry, particularly for small businesses.

### **Tour of Facilities**

870

County staff conducted a tour of local disposal and recycling facilities for task force members. The purpose of the tour was to familiarize SWTF members with various sites that are not routinely open to the public as well as provide opportunities to research issues for the environmental and operations topics that are part of the charter of the task force. On September 1, 2004, task force members toured seven local disposal and recycling facilities. The facilities were a mix of county-owned and private operations, and included the following locations:

877

- Loudoun Composting, LLC
- Capitol Fiber, Inc.
- Newington-county collection office
- Lorton Construction/Demolition/Debris Landfill
- I-95 Complex
- Energy/Resource Recovery Facility
- I-66 Transfer Station

885

Details and information about each of the sites is located in Appendix E.

887

The following discussion and recommendations are the result of extensive conversations and analysis completed by the task force to determine how residential waste collection operations should be conducted in the future. One of the biggest benefits of this analysis, beyond the findings of fact, was the increased awareness of all the stakeholders about how complex the integrated waste management system is in Fairfax County and how we need all the stakeholders doing their part to keep it operating effectively in the future.

### **Inspections and Permitting of Vehicles**

\* 895

Discussion. Fairfax County Code § 109-3-1, 109-4-1, 109-4-2, and 109-4-5 requires that all collectors operating in Fairfax County be permitted by the county. This includes an annual inspection of each vehicle, and obtaining or renewing a bond. The discussion concerned the nature of the inspections performed by county staff and whether the process involved with permitting a waste collection vehicle was onerous to the collection companies. The purpose of the permit process was to provide proper identification of the collection vehicles for tracking and billing purposes and to have an inspection of the vehicle to ensure safety of operations.

905

The task force agreed that the permitting process is necessary for the county to manage the disposal process, account for waste disposed, and bill companies for using the disposal facilities. The permitting

requirements support the county's billing and information management needs and are not difficult for collection companies to meet. The cost of permitting of collection vehicles (\$80 per truck), including the required bonding, is simply a cost of doing business for the collection companies.

913

County staff completes the permitting process in May and June of each year, and even travel to collection companies parking areas when requested to inspect the vehicles. The county operated permit office is typically fully staffed during the two months of permitting to reduce wait times.

### **Assurance Bond Policy**

\* 919

Discussion. Fairfax County Code § 109-4 -5 required a bond be posted for each waste collection truck to ensure that the disposal bills from the county for that truck could be paid, or if necessary, the county would have the short-term ability to pay for collection of the waste from customers should the collection company be unable to provide the service. The task force's discussion considered the process of obtaining the county-required \$10,000 bond per vehicle. Bonds are issued by private bonding companies and the county cannot influence the cost charged nor the process involved to obtain a bond. The bond cost is based upon several factors including the credit history and stability of the collection company, the potential risk exposure to the bonding company, and trends in the overall waste industry. Risk and credit worthiness are significant factors in granting a bond to a collection company. Recently some bonding companies have elected to raise their fees due to waste industry consolidations and risk exposure they have experienced throughout their business.

934

If a collector cannot obtain a bond, the county already accepts alternative financial instruments in lieu of a bond to provide the needed measure of financial security. The county also allows payment schedules for companies that may have temporary cash flow problems. The task force considered the cost of obtaining a bond to be reasonable at between \$100 and \$200 for a \$10,000 bond. The current permitting and bond process appears to be working well and the task force did not identify a need for changes.

### **Unified Recycling Activities**

943

Discussion. The task force members were very supportive of developing a unified recycling message for all collectors to give to their curbside collection customers. It was agreed that the county had the resources and general mission to educate the public about countywide recycling activities. Therefore the county should develop appropriate materials about how to recycle and what materials can be recycled and offer those materials to collection companies for distribution to their customers. The collection companies could then personalize the materials and distribute the printed information to their customers.

\* 952

The county plans to expand curbside collection of recyclables to include mixed paper, cardboard, and plastic bottles. Voluntary participation in curbside collection of the new materials begins July 1, 2005 with mandatory participation starting January 1, 2006. This expansion of the recycling program to add new materials was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in the Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). This enhanced recycling program offers the opportunity for county residents to do most of their recycling curbside.

960

A collection company representative noted a concern about ensuring there were markets for the additional materials to be recycled. Also work was needed to identify state and federal incentives for companies who want to become recyclers in the area. The increase in recyclable materials may result in opportunities to add new businesses in the county. Recyclers that were contacted by task force members indicated they are adding capacity in anticipation of the enhanced recycling program adopted as part of the SWMP. Other local jurisdictions already require the materials (cardboard, mixed paper and plastic bottles) that Fairfax County plans to add. It was the opinion of county staff that finding markets for the additional materials will not be difficult, since recyclers were already marketing these materials.

## **Recommendations**

975

O-1. County staff should develop enhanced recycling educational materials using various media to illustrate unified recycling countywide. Materials will include source reduction and reuse, what to recycle, how to recycle items correctly, and how to purchase recycled products to close the loop. Information should be provided to the collectors in a camera-ready format, suitable for companies to add their names and logos prior to distributing to their customers. The standardized materials should be in multiple languages and advertised within the various language media.

984

O-2. County staff should introduce additional recycling materials for curbside collection all at once instead of one material at a time. It is easier to educate the public about all the new changes at one time rather than piecemeal the new requirements.

989

O-3. County staff should support the siting of new recycling facilities within the county including yard waste composting sites, as needed to handle the increased amounts of recyclable materials generated in the county.

## **Enforcement Issues**

\* 994

Discussion. Fairfax County Code § 109-1-2 authorizes the county's Director of Public Works and Environmental Services to enforce its provisions. That authority has been delegated to the Directors of the Solid Waste Management Program, Division of Solid Waste Disposal and Resource Recovery and the Division of Solid Waste Collection and Recycling. However, there needed to be "teeth" (i.e., significant penalties) in the enforcement to obtain better compliance with some of the provisions of the chapter. The county did not want to become the "trash police," but the task force recognizes the need for enforcement in this area. There should be ways to cite collectors for violations without using the onerous magistrate process currently required in Fairfax County Code § 109-1-3. Perhaps administrative sanctions would be effective, if they could be identified.

1006

The task force felt that county staff should devise sanctions to deal with collection companies who were not complying with the code. The task force members have indicated they want violators of the code to be dealt with effectively (maybe even publicly) so that collection companies who comply with the code are acknowledged.

1012

The task force noted that many of the "compliance" issues under the county code may be rectified if most collectors subscribe to the quality customer service standards developed as part of this task force's work. Many service questions or "non-compliance" incidents revolve around communication and expectations between collection companies and their customers. Most of the issues the task force analyzed were not true code enforcement situations but rather derived from the contractual relationship between customers and collectors. In the best situation, the county cannot enforce the code beyond the minimum levels of service described in the code. The quality customer service standards were an attempt to describe service provision beyond the "minimum levels" and address communication and expectations between collection companies and their customers. If customers received poor service, they could change collection companies-that is the ultimate remedy or enforcement for violations of customer service expectations. However, it was noted that few of the residential collection firms operating in the county collect countywide.

## **Recommendations**

\* 1030

O-4. County staff should explore administrative remedies that would allow the more efficient enforcement of Fairfax County Code Chapter 109 provisions, which may include seeking authority from the General Assembly.

\* 1034

O-5. County staff should consider publishing a list of collection companies who receive violations, much like the Health Department publicizes lists of health code violations. This way companies not receiving violations could market their compliance with the code.

## **Consequences of the County Getting Out of Direct Waste Collection**

**PASSED**

**MOTION Queenie Second: Conrad**

**1040--add "in Sanitary Districts" to the title of the section**

1041

Discussion. Given that the county currently provides direct waste collection services to about 15% of county residences located in sanitary districts, county staff had been **asked by the a member** of the Board of Supervisors to investigate the consequences of the county utilizing private contractors for that service. The task force included this topic in its extensive discussions of residential waste collection operations in the county, and went further by discussing if the county should be involved at any level providing service, contracted or not.

**ADMIN**

**Line 1043: Correction: "by a member"**

\* 1049

As background, sanitary districts are established by the Board of Supervisors following a homeowner initiated petition process and a public hearing. Homeowners in the sanitary districts pay for the collection services as a separate fee on their tax bill. Sanitary district services are provided by a mix of county and privately contracted services. About 110 full-time county employees provide most of the waste collection services, while a private company provides all the collection of recyclables. This service affords once-a-week trash collection and once per week pick up of recyclable materials, including yard waste. Special collections are done by county staff using specialized equipment beyond the regular trash collection vehicles. A separate vacuum-leaf collection program is also operated by the county for seasonal leaf collection, and staff from the collection operation also operate this seasonal program. County staff analyzes the work requirements needed in sanitary districts and utilizes contracts with private firms for many aspects of the work. A map at Appendix F shows the areas of the county that are currently in sanitary districts.

\* 1065

Once the county has created a sanitary district to provide solid waste collection, the option for the county to unilaterally discontinue that service without a petition from the citizens to decreate the district does not exist. Therefore, without a change in state law or unless citizens petition to decreate a sanitary district, the only option for the county is to continue direct collection service or to administer a contract(s) for the service.

\* 1072

The economic consequences of the county getting out of direct collection were also analyzed. It was noted that fees paid by county customers cover the total cost of the county collection services. These fees were paid only by those residents who received the services and not from the General Fund. Therefore, the task force recognized that there would be no impact on the county's General Fund were the county to end direct waste collection because the money paid by the homeowners in the sanitary districts would pass through the county to pay the private collector contract(s).

**NOT PASSED**

**MOTION: Queenie No Second**

**Line 1075: Impact on homeowner?**



**NOT PASSED**

**MOTION:** Paul Liberty:      **Second:** Bill

Require the county to adopt a sunset provision for any future sanitary districts every five years, whereby the county will be required to certify that the district would like to continue being in existence. For existing districts, the county would begin a process to have each district certify that they would like to maintain the present relationship. For districts in existence for more than five years, the process for certification would begin as of July 1, 2006. For districts with less than five years of existence, their certification would begin on the fifth anniversary of their creation.

If legislation is necessary; the county should seek a technical amendment to the law governing sanitary districts to obtain such a provision.

The certification process would enable greater flexibility for customers to evaluate market conditions and provide necessary feedback to the government to plan for equipment and manpower expenditures related to the districts for future periods.

\* 1081

Since the waste system in Fairfax County was very complex, the task force further considered the positive and negative consequences of the county getting out of direct waste collection from the perspectives of county residents, private collection companies and the county's Solid Waste Management Program. This thorough analysis yielded significant insights for task force members as they realized the value that each of the three perspectives added to the overall discussion. A detailed summary of that discussion is included in Appendix B as part of the meeting minutes from the November 30 and December 14, 2004 task force meetings.

\* 1090

In the final analysis, the task force considered several recommendations about the county's role in county's role in sanitary district waste collection operations. Four models were specifically explored to see what, if any, potential benefits of the models there were. The future residential waste collection system could become a combination of the current system or fundamentally changed, depending upon which model is selected. The four models centered around:

\* 1096

-- Maintaining the status quo in the sanitary districts.

1097

-- Maintaining the sanitary districts but contracting all the collection services with private collection companies.

1099

-- Maintaining the sanitary districts but have private collections companies collect trash/recyclables and have the county continue brush, yard waste and specials collection.

1102

-- Maintaining the current number of sanitary districts without increasing the size of the districts or adding any new customers.

**Recommendation**

\*1107

O-6. County staff should further analyze if the county should contract more of its collection services in the sanitary districts recognizing that the county already contracts-out many services performed in the sanitary districts.

**PASSED**

**MOTION:** Bill      **Second:** John

No recommendation for this section. Instead, move this sentence to the last line of the previous section.

**NOT PASSED**

**MOTION:** Queenie      **Second:**

1107--Recommend rewording the sentence to read "County staff should further analyze the four models regarding the County's role in sanitary district waste collection operations." The rest of the language should be deleted.--Queenie

**Process for Procurement of County Contracts**

1112

Discussion. State procurement regulations determine the policies and procedures that the county uses in soliciting goods and services. Periodically, unusually every 5 years, the county issues a solicitation asking private collection companies to submit proposals to collect recyclable materials or trash in the legally designated county sanitary districts.

**ADMIN CORRECTION:**

**Paul Liberty**

Line 1114 change word "unusually" to "usually"

Change tense in first sentence: determine, uses, issues, etc.

1118

Initially, a few task force members thought the existing county's procurement process may disadvantage some collection companies because a small company might not be able to provide collection services over all the sanitary districts, but could provide excellent services in a smaller area. However, it was pointed out by staff that the same procurement process was used countywide for all contracts and that small business and minority-owned business "set-asides" were not allowed in Virginia.

1126

The idea was proposed and discussed about carving up the sanitary districts into smaller areas that could be individually bid. County staff explained that because the sanitary district process occurs twice each year, the county has minimal time to arrange for services once a sanitary district is approved by the Board of Supervisors. For example, the latest sanitary district was approved in October for services to begin in January, 2005. There was not sufficient time to competitively solicit each sanitary district and the cost of preparing a separate solicitation for each sanitary district would be expensive, not to mention the administrative costs of monitoring several varying contracts. Additionally, the advantage of a single contract is that a firm fixed price is provided for at least a one-year period, which may not be possible if multiple contracts are issued.

1138

One member asked if the task force could recommend developing a threshold for the number of new customers or set other parameters that when met would require that a new collection solicitation to be issued for that sanitary district. For example, if a block of 200 customers were expected to be added in a new sanitary district, the county could prepare a solicitation for that sanitary district and have it ready to publish as soon as the Board of Supervisors approved the creation of the sanitary district. If 200 new customers were added to various sanitary districts throughout the county, it would not make sense to have a new solicitation, but the additional customers would simply be added to the existing contract for the appropriate sanitary districts.

**Recommendations**

\* 1151

O-7. County staff should analyze the recycling contract areas to determine if the contract can be divided and bid in modules. Currently the recycling collection is performed by one vendor for all 42,000 homes in the sanitary districts. It is recognized that one company still may win multiple awards, or that consolidation over time may occur.

**PASSED**

**MOTION:** Queenie      **SECOND:** Bill

1151--reword to read "Currently the recycling collection is performed by one vendor for all 42,000 homes in the sanitary districts. County staff should analyze the feasibility of sectioning sanitary districts into multiple contracts and its impact on the competition and the homeowners. It is recognized that one company..... occur."

The rest of the sentence(s) sounds like a complaint from the SWTF.

\* 1156

O-8. County staff should continue to let collection companies know of upcoming solicitations in monthly newsletters and at quarterly collectors meetings.

**ADMIN**

**LINE 1156:** "....continue to notify collection companies of upcoming..."

\* 1158

O-9. Waste collection companies proposing to perform work for the county should subscribe to the quality customer service standards developed as part of this report.

## Chapter 5 Communications

### Overview of the Communication Issues

1164

Communication became a fundamental element of much of the discussion and recommendations of this report regarding customer service, environmental and operations issues. Central to the quality customer service standards discussion was the need for collection companies to have written standards to provide to their customers about how they intended to perform collection services. Some of the enhancements in the environmental chapter dealt with establishing better communications among the county, collection companies, homeowners associations, and county residents. Significantly, communication supported the operation of the free market, competitive economy in the county, since residents must know their options when choosing a residential waste collection company. In the final analysis, the task force agreed that full and forthright communication is necessary for competition to support good customer service for county residents. Informed and educated consumers were the surest way to sustain and enhance a world-class integrated waste management system such as we have in Fairfax County.

1179

Communication about solid waste issues occurred in many different ways in Fairfax County. Clear, effective communication was desired by all parties involved with this report. Since many of the customer service and operational issues could be attributable to breakdowns in communication, the task force considered incorporating discussions about communication within other chapters of this report. However, as the process evolved, it became clearer to the members that resolving communication issues and establishing reasonable expectations were pivotal to resolving the current and future issues. Because of its key importance, the task force agreed that the ideas about improving communication warranted a separate chapter for discussion and recommendations.

1189

Specific recommendations contained in other chapters will not be re-addressed here, but additional suggestions and recommendations will be made about the roles of various stakeholders in improving communications to ensure that satisfactory strides are made toward resolving the issues presented to the task force. By definition improving communications means communicating more frequently and in more effective ways.

### Fairfax County's Role in Communication

1196

Discussion. Fairfax County has traditionally taken the lead role in providing countywide communication to the general public regarding solid waste policies and procedures within the county. The county works with

collection companies and other groups to develop appropriate messages about existing and new countywide programs such as the expansion of curbside recycling. Staff prepares brochures and flyers to educate residents and businesses about recycled materials required for collection and how to prepare the materials correctly for recycling. These communication materials are made available to collectors to distribute to their customers. County staff continues to expand the information maintained on its website to help residents understand the complexities and requirements of the integrated waste management system in Fairfax County. Also the county's website will become a focal point for keeping the list of collection companies that adopt the Quality Customer Service Standards, developed as part of the task force's work.

1210

Moreover, the county's website already contains important information for collection companies and residents and is updated frequently. However, the information regarding solid waste is difficult to find when using the county's home page. The task force believes that the Subject Areas of the website (shown on the far right side of the website) should contain the subject heading Trash and Recycling, in order to make the subject matter more readily accessible. The current website requires users to know that the subject matter falls under Public Works and Utilities or Environment, which is cumbersome.

1218

The task force emphasized that frequent updating of information on this web site was also critical and county staff indicated that updates are made weekly to this site. The task force also supported the county's continued role in maintaining the web based information on solid waste, including providing links to collection companies operating in the county. While staff has noted that web administrators currently prohibit such links, these companies have obtained permits from the county to collect waste, and sign contracts with the county to deliver waste. Allowing links to collection company web sites would provide another means of facilitating communication to residents and businesses of the policies and procedures that individual companies utilize.

1228

The task force agreed that the county is not expected to become the customer service interface between collection companies and their customers, however, the county's communication methods are well established and should incorporate features of how to reach collection companies. Various methods of communication should be used to deliver the county's communication messages including PSAs, Channel 16, paid radio/TV ads, newspaper articles, public affairs news releases and publications, and others. The county's role in improving communication should extend to improving compliance and reducing the need for enforcement actions. The county's role in further communication to the community and collection companies should include:

1238

-- Coordinating future countywide communications regarding, environmental, customer service, and operations issues.

1240

-- Continuing its regulatory enforcement role to ensure that collectors are aware of, and comply with the county code.

1242

-- Providing the general public information about the collectors' Quality Customer Service Standards by enhancing its website.

1244

-- Linking to those collectors who request to have their websites linked to the county site.

1246

-- Maintaining a data base of zip codes served by collection companies that will assist residents who wish to find a collector, and placing the information on the website or other accessible location for residents.

1249

-- Communicating with collectors, doing so more frequently during emergencies, to facilitate recovery from disasters or emergencies. Also, supporting a voluntary service whereby collection companies subscribe to the county's emergency alert system. The system could keep collectors informed about weather and other events that activate the alert system.

### **Recommendations**

1256

COMM-1. County staff should modify the county's website home page to reflect a new subject area entitled "Trash and Recycling" which would directly connect users to existing information more expeditiously.

1260

COMM-2. County staff should develop a methodology to allow webpage links from the county's solid waste website to collection companies that are permitted to operate by the county.

1264

COMM-3. County staff should continue to take the lead role in disseminating information about county solid waste and recycling policies and procedures through multiple communication channels.

1268

COMM-4. County staff should expand its use of Channel 16 to communicate information related to the solid waste management program.

1271

COMM-5. County staff should add a link from the Community Association Manual on its website to the Trash and Recycling webpage.

### **Collectors' Role in Communication**

1275

Traditionally, solid waste collectors have communicated with customers differently based upon their own policies and procedures. Some companies only provide written information to new customers, while others provide written policies and procedures more frequently. Usually, customer communication comes to the collector in the form of a question or complaint, and it is paramount that collection companies have the equipment and personnel in place to adequately answer questions and inquiries from their customer base. Collectors will be encouraged to provide the level of communication necessary in the Quality Customer Service Standards, including more frequent communications with customers. There are many avenues that collectors can use in communication such as, communicating to customers in invoices, developing web-based information, or partnering with county staff in routine correspondence. The task force agreed that the preferred manner to address issues, especially customer service issues, would be to have customers and their collection companies resolve the issues without outside intervention.

1290

Communications strategies for the collectors could include:

1291

-- Adopting and communicating the their customers the quality customer service standards advocated by the task force and developed in conjunction with collection companies.

1294

-- Being accessible by telephone, email, or other methods.

1295

-- Being responsive to the concerns of customers by addressing service issues quickly.

1297

-- Communicating more frequently with their customers.

1298

-- Subscribing to the county's community emergency alert system so the collectors will know when emergency situations activate the system.

### **Customer's Role in Communication**

1302

Customers are also involved in communication and they commonly communicate openly when they perceive something in the solid waste process has gone wrong. Their communication can range from missed curbside collections to complaints of speeding trucks in neighborhoods. Sometimes there is a communication gap at the customers' level, because they do not understand the policies/procedures or regulatory issues associated with solid waste. Occasionally, customers phoning the county do not even have the information about who their service provider is. The outreach developed by the county and collectors is an important element necessary to the customer. Two-way communication is essential. Some ways customers can improve communications are by:

1312

-- Reading and complying with guidance provided by the county or the collection company regarding proper curbside set-out of waste and recycling materials.

1315

-- Notifying their collection company when service problems arise and notify the county only if resolution does not occur.

1317

-- Choosing a collection company that best fits with their needs, including their communication expectations.

1319

-- Accessing county staff and/or the Board of Supervisors to state their concerns if countywide policy changes are necessary.

1321

-- Referring to the Quality Customer Service Standards in homeowner association collection agreements/contracts.

## **Appendices**

### **A List of Categorized Issues**

### **B Minutes of Solid Waste Task Force Meetings**

### **C Quality Customer Service Standards**

### **D County Research on Plastic versus Paper Bags for Yard Waste Collection**

### **E Tour of Facilities**

### **F Map of Fairfax County showing Sanitary Districts**

## **Introductory Letter**

**ADMIN:** Add s to "Supervisor" on address line:

Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Paragraph 1: REPLACED

The Solid Waste Task Force (SWTF) was created as a result of significant public outcry from a county staff's proposal to "overseeing residential collection to all county households" during a public hearing

discussing the 20 year Solid Waste Management Plan. Members of the Board recognized that this radical proposal required more study (along with other important issues surrounding customer services, the environment and interaction between haulers and the county) and created the SWTF to bring together citizens, county staff and the hauler community to address the issues raised in the public hearing.

**PASSED**

**MOTION:** Bill **Second:** Sheila

**Replace paragraph 1 with this:**

In 2004, the county staff presented the 20 Year Solid Waste Management Plan as required by the state. One element of that plan recommended the county oversee residential solid waste collection for all county households. After vigorous public objections, the recommendation was removed from the 20 year plan. Members of the Board recognized that important issues identified in the Plan including customer service, the environment, and the interaction between haulers and the county required more study and public input. The Board created the Solid Waste Task Force to bring together citizens, county staff and the hauler community to address the issues raised in the 20 Year Plan.

**Paragraph 2:**

Through an exhaustive meeting schedule, the SWTF evaluated far reaching matters and carefully considered options available to the citizens, the county and the hauler community on a wide range of topics. The debate was strong, but the members of the SWTF worked to find common ground to meet our objectives and generate a document which could help guide the county for the years to come.

**PASSED**

**MOTION:** Queenie **SECOND:** Conrad

**Add "range of topics regarding solid waste management." at the end of the first sentence in the second paragraph**

**PASSED**

**MOTION:** Joyce D **Second:** Joyce B

**Replace "common ground" with "reach consensus"**

**Paragraph 3: REPLACED**

This report is the result of representatives from customers, government and industry working to enhance the service delivery of solid waste collection in Fairfax County. We strongly urge you to adopt the recommendations spelled out in the report and implement a strategic plan to see that they are properly executed on the by county staff to ensure long term viability of the county's solid waste system.

**PASSED**

**MOTION:** ALL **SECOND:** EVERYONE

**Paragraph 3:**

This report is the result of representatives from customers, government and industry working to enhance the service delivery of solid waste collection in Fairfax County. We strongly urge you to adopt the recommendations spelled out in the report and implement a strategic plan with measurable goals.

We appreciate having been selected by the Board to serve in our roles on the SWTF and thank you for the opportunity to serve our fellow citizens of Fairfax County.

Sincerely,

Members of the Solid Waste Task Force

**PASSED**

**MOTION:** Paul **Second:** Bill

**Delete Sincerely,**